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Special Committee on
decolonization
Meeting (AM)

GA/COL/2967
17 June 1997 1476th

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON DECOLONIZATION CONTINUES HEARINGS ON EAST TIMOR QUESTION

Some Petitioners Report Economic Progress under Indonesia, While Others Cite Human Rights Abuses by Indonesian Armed Forces

Petitioners supporting the integration of East Timor into Indonesia this morning told the Special Committee on decolonization that the Territory had experienced marked socio-economic progress under Indonesia, as the Committee continued its hearings on the situation in that Territory. Others, however, said the East Timorese had experienced human rights abuses by the Indonesian armed forces there and must be guaranteed their right of self-determination.

A representative of the East Timor-based COVALIMA organization said that, although innuendo and propaganda had coloured the perceptions of many with respect to conditions in East Timor, the Territory's infrastructure had improved since its integration with Indonesia. He said the $199 million in Indonesian Government grants to the Territory were almost 100 times more than the average yearly expenditure during the days of colonial rule.

A retired General of the Portuguese Air Force said Indonesia's presence in East Timor was not as a result of military invasion, but of a request by four Timorese non-communist parties that represented the great majority of the population. In East Timor, there were now dozens of new schools, a growing common language, modern hospitals, and new roads and houses. If Indonesia gave up the Territory, it would be "a crime with catastrophic consequences", he said.

Taking a different view, a member of the Social Democratic CentrePopular Party in the Portuguese Parliament said Indonesia had tried to justify its military by implying it had developed the Territory economically. However, data from statistics published by the Indonesian Government itself clearly showed signs of underdevelopment. He questioned whether the improvements which had been made were worth the lives they had cost or the freedom of the East Timorese people.

A number of petitioners, including a representative of Parliamentarians for East Timor, stressed that the East Timorese had not been able to exercise their right to self-determination. Today, the people of East Timor continued to experience an abuse of their human rights, she said. A representative of

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Pax Christi International said confidence-building initiatives, such as a reduction of Indonesian troops occupying the Territory and regular access to East Timor by United Nations special rapporteurs and human rights groups could provide a foundation for dealing with self-determination issues.

Statements were also made by various individual petitioners and members of political parties, as well as for the following organizations: the International League for Human Rights; the Associaçao Socialista de Timor; the SOS Associaçao de defesa dos Angolanos; the East Timor Students Movement; and the Ema Mata dalan ba Progressu. The representative of Indonesia spoke on a point of order, and the representative of Portugal spoke in exercise of the right of reply.

The Special Committee on decolonization will meet again at 3 p.m. today to conclude its hearings on the question of East Timor.

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Special Committee Work Programme

The Special Committee on decolonization met this morning to continue its hearings on the question of East Timor. (For background, see Press Release GA/COL/2965 of 16 June.)

Statements

REBECCA KAUFFMAN, of Pax Christi International, said her organization supported all United Nations efforts, including the use of the SecretaryGeneral's good offices, to achieve a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable settlement of the question of East Timor. While a long-term solution in East Timor was being debated, confidence-building initiatives could provide a foundation for mechanisms to deal with self-determination issues. Such initiatives could include the reduction of Indonesian troops occupying East Timor and honouring commitments agreed to by the Commission on Human Rights.

Such measures could also include uninhibited and regular access to East Timor and United Nations Special Rapporteurs, Working Groups and specialized agencies, as well as international human rights groups and the implementation of all international human rights instruments. The United Nations-sponsored dialogue should continue and the Timorese included in any serious proposal. Mechanisms should also be established to respect the religious and cultural traditions of the East Timorese people and to protect their social, economic and political rights, including their right to self-determination.

ROGER CLARK, of the International League for Human Rights, said the human rights of the East Timorese people had been violated. Various United Nations human rights monitoring bodies had drawn attention to such violations, despite Indonesian denials. Indonesia had no more legitimacy in East Timor than Germany had in France in 1943. United Nations Member States, including colonial Powers, had an obligation to support the self-determination of the East Timorese people.

He condemned the Indonesian policy of resettlement, which he said could result in the East Timorese people becoming a minority in their own country. That Indonesian action was a breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention. He urged the Special Committee to issue a strong resolution reiterating the right of the East Timorese people to self-determination.

AZANCOT DE MENEZES, of the Associaçao Socialista de Timor, drew attention to various General Assembly resolution on East Timor since 1975 and urged their implementation. He said an official of his organization should be invited to participate in the United Nations-sponsored meetings on East Timor. The United Nations should reject any proposals which would give Indonesia sovereignty over the territory. It should create objective conditions leading to self-determination by the East Timorese people. His organization would like Portugal to return as the colonial Power in East Timor, to complete the decolonization process interrupted by Indonesia's 1975 invasion.

SHARON SCHARFE, of Parliamentarians for East Timor, said one of the objectives of her organization, which had more than 900 members in all regions of the world, was to draw the attention of the international community to the situation in East Timor. The East Timorese had not been able to exercise their right to self-determination. The Special Committee had a special role in promoting self-governance, but the question of East Timor had been on its agenda for too long. There was now a glimmer of hope for resolution of the issue, since the election of the new Secretary-General and the subsequent appointment of his Special Representative with a mandate to assist the parties in resolving the conflict.

Today, the people of East Timor continued to experience an abuse of their human rights, particularly by the Indonesian Armed Forces, she said. The Special Committee should reaffirm that no valid act of self-determination had taken place in East Timor, that Indonesia should withdraw its troops from East Timor, and that Indonesia must abide by the United Nations resolutions on East Timor. She called on Member States to move towards the final process of decolonization in East

scattered around the world must not be forgotten. The brutality in East Timor was being carried out by a repressive authoritarian regime, not by a people. Indonesian men and women had shown that they wanted change. The people of Indonesia and East Timor had a joint struggle to wage.

MARTY MULIANA NATALEGAWA (Indonesia) said the speaker should not refer to issues of a domestic nature which were not being discussed in the Committee.

Continuing, Mr. CASTANHEIRA JORGE said the case of East Timor involved moral imperatives. The right of the Timorese people to self-determination and independence must be reaffirmed. The political development of the people must be assured. The desire of the Socialist Party of Portugal was that, in 1998, it would not be necessary for the Special Committee to take up the issue of East Timor for the thirty-seventh time, as they would have achieved selfdetermination.

MANUEL MACEDO, a Portuguese entrepreneur, said Portugal's politicians could not continue to spread lies to the world about its role in East Timor and its colonial policy in a number of countries. East Timor had revolted against the Portuguese, leading to a violent civil war. After 20 years, it was time to end the Portuguese effort to whitewash everything that happened in East Timor. Portugal's withdrawal from East Timor had represented an abandonment of the Territory, he said. The Portuguese had spread lies and indulged in blackmail on the issue of East Timor. No referendum had ever been conducted in any former Portuguese colony. Why was it being proposed for East Timor? He had been persecuted for defending the truth, he said. Nevertheless, he supported the reunification of East and West Timor, which had been separated by colonial Powers with the complicity of Portugal.

Right of Reply

FERNANDO NEVES (Portugal), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said the manner in which the petitioner had referred to Portugal's politicians and the freely elected representatives of its people showed a lack of respect. The statement that he was persecuted was a blatant lie. The petitioner was entitled to his own opinion, but he was not entitled to invent falsehoods. The Portuguese Government would not deny him his rights, although the people of East Timor had been denied theirs.

ANTONIO TAVARES, of the SOS Associaçao de Defas dos Angolanos, said his was an Angolan organization based in Portugal which aimed at promoting and defending the human rights of Angolans. It was appearing before the Special Committee to express its solidarity with the people of East Timor. The Associaçao was sensitive to the suffering of the East Timorese people. He appealed to the United Nations to abide by its own resolutions and help the East Timorese, just as it had assisted others -as in Angola -- to achieve self-determination.

General CARLOS GALVAO DE MELLO, retired Portuguese Air Force officer, said Indonesia's presence in East Timor was not due to military invasion, but to a request by four Timorese non-communist parties that represented the great majority of the population. The so-called Timor problem had been made up. "A certain political view, contrary to peace and the well-being of the people", which used highly paid media, was totally responsible for the situation.

He said the East Timorese people had returned to their origins. There were now dozens of new schools, one growing common language, modern hospitals, and new roads and houses. Christianity had been supported through the construction of new churches. If Indonesia gave up the Territory, it would be "a crime with catastrophic consequences", he said.

OCTAVIO SOARES, of the East Timor Students Movement, said the Territory had entered a new era as a member of the international community through its integration with its Indonesia. Before that, it was viewed by Portugal as merely of its colonies. Its people were seen as underdeveloped, poor, neglected and oppressed. After integration with Indonesia, conditions had changed "like night and day". The neglect which marked all aspects of life in the country during Portuguese colonial rule had changed through development. As a free people, the East Timorese could now express themselves and develop. They belonged to Indonesia, just as the whole of Indonesia now belonged to the East Timorese.

After integration, the East Timorese had gradually transformed themselves into a modern

Timor, expressing the hope that the Special Committee would facilitate that process.

RODICA PINTEA-AUSTIN, of London University, said there had been a lack of substantial progress on the question of East Timor. Stressing that the United Nations epitomized hopes and aspirations for the future, she said selfdetermination was a universal right. However, the history and analysis of the annexation of East Timor in 1975 showed it had been a practical matter. Portugal left the Territory, and the international Powers at the time regarded the annexation as a fait accompli.

There was now a changing perception of the issue of East Timor as a result of media attention, she said. Lack of support for the East Timorese by Western Governments had left the field open to interpretation. There must now be multilateral acceptance of collective responsibility. Leaving Indonesia to take unilateral responsibility for the situation was not appropriate.

NUNO KRUS ABECASIS, member of the Social Democratic Centre-Popular Party in the Portuguese Parliament, said the Portuguese Constitution recognized the right to self-determination of East Timorese people. Any statement against their rights was considered a violation of the Constitution. The cause of the East Timorese should not be forgotten. The Secretary-General's commitment to a just and comprehensive settlement of the East Timorese conflict was welcomed.

The 1996 Nobel Peace Prize had drawn world attention to the struggle of the East Timorese people, he said. Indonesia had tried to justify its military occupation of East Timor by implying that it had developed the Territory economically. Economic and social data available from statistics published by the Indonesian Government itself clearly showed signs of underdevelopment. Indonesian efforts at development had resulted in six hospitals, 200 elementary schools, 30 high schools, one industrial school, one polytechnic and about 2,000 kilometres of roads. "Is this group of works, or even 10 times this number, worth the human lives it costs and people's freedom, that remain captive and silenced on their own land?" he asked.

ANTONIO BARBOSA DE MELO, Social Democratic Party member in the Portuguese Parliament, said any statement against the rights of the East Timorese people was considered a violation of the Portuguese Constitution, which recognized their right to self-determination. He appealed to Indonesia to respect the resolutions of the United Nations and the objectives of the Movement of Non-Aligned countries, to which it belonged.

He and United Nations reports had drawn attention to many violations of the rights of the East Timorese people, including acts of torture, executions without trial, intimidation of the population and migration of Indonesians to the Territory in order to change its demographic characteristics. Petitioners appearing before the Special Committee had corroborated those violations. The East Timorese people had a right to self-determination, he said.

PEDRO RICARDO CAVACO CASTANHEIRA JORGE, member of the Socialist Party of Portugal, said the international community could only find a solution to the question of East Timor in international law. The Portuguese democratic institutions were committed to a resolution of the issue and to guaranteeing the rights of the East Timorese people. The issue of East Timor had mobilized the youth in Portugal, because young Timorese had been the target of abuse by the Indonesian armed forces. The East Timorese had been subjected to genocide, but had resisted for 20 years.

The true defenders of the Timorese people remained devoted to their cause, he said. In an era of increased communication and the establishment of an international interparliamentary system, it was crucial to create a network to observe the situation in East Timor and to gather information to report to the international community. East Timor should be allowed to exercise its right to self-determination. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to two Timorese had contributed to progress on the issue.

Despite Portuguese diplomacy and that country's efforts to alert the international community, 22 years of genocide had taken place, he said. There had been developments on the diplomatic front, but reprisals against the Maubere people continued daily. The Timorese people

community, as a prosperous, free people, he said. Before integration, people who could read constituted only around 7 per cent of the population. That number had now increased to around 87 per cent. Excluding priests and former priests, there were only three university graduates during the colonial period. After integration, that number had reached about 500 persons and the struggle to improve the socio-economic condition of the Territory was not over. All efforts for its prosperity should be safeguarded against negative moves by forces outside East Timor to ruin it.

NATERCIA OSORIO SOARES, an individual petitioner, said Portugal had failed to carry out the decolonization process in Portuguese Timor in a natural and honest way. It had toyed with the fate of hundreds of thousands of people whom it had colonized. It had left behind a time bomb which affected the stability of the region. Portugal's present attitude in altering facts with respect to East Timor had helped prolong the problem. The youth of East Timor had ruined their future as a result of Portugal's false promises.

She appealed to the international community to be objective in assessing the situation in East Timor. The people living in East Timor were the ones who knew the real situation and what their hopes were. It was they who had the right to determine their own fate.

FLORENTINO SARMENTO, Chairman of Ema Mata dalan ba Progressu, a Timorese non-governmental organization working in rural East Timor, said it seemed as though East Timor's history had only begun in 1974. From his experience working at the grass-roots level in East Timor, he realized that information on the Territory had been one-sided and was usually given by those who had not lived there.

The true story of East Timor must include the bitter experience of Portuguese exploitation, he said. The Portuguese had not completed the decolonization process, but had abandoned the East Timorese. As a result, the Timorese would never allow the Portuguese to return to East Timor. In the present era of globalization, there were many possibilities for integration which allowed countries to be identified by their culture.

Why was East Timor still on the United Nations agenda as a Non-SelfGoverning Territory? he asked. The integration of East Timor with Indonesia was a matter to be defended, not discussed, despite its weaknesses. Instead of only looking at the process, the international community must look at the objectives of that integration, which were development, prosperity, social justice and peace.

SIMAO DE ASSUNÇAO, of the East Timor-based COVALIMA organization, said that after plundering the Territory for 450 years, Portugal left it with only two hospitals and 14 clinics. Today, there were 11 hospitals and 332 village health centres, and their numbers continued to increase. Every East Timorese child now enjoyed the fundamental right to education. There were 715 elementary, 114 junior high and 58 senior high schools, as well as four centres of higher education.

He said the Territory's economic infrastructure had improved since its integration with Indonesia, and it had received some $199 million in Indonesian Government grants -- "almost 100 times more than the average yearly expenditure of East Timor during the days of colonial rule". Per capita income had increased from $34.20 in the mid-1970s at the end of colonial rule, to $265.50 at present. Some $150 million in domestic investment projects had been approved by the central government, and the industrial sector had attracted foreign investment of $15 million.

In view of the positive development in the Territory, he said, he was baffled by Portugal's note verbale of 20 May 1997, which contained "misleading information" on East Timor. He questioned the basis of Portugal's claim as the "Administering Authority" when it was the same Power that abandoned the Territory to a tragic fate -- a bloody civil war with thousands of fatalities. Innuendo and propaganda had coloured the perceptions of many with respect for the prevailing conditions in East Timor.

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---------- Message Contents ----------

Special Committee on decolonization
1477th Meeting (PM)

GA/COL/2968
17 June 1997

EAST TIMOR HAS CEASED TO BE DECOLONIZATION ISSUE, INDONESIA SAYS, AS DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE CONCLUDES HEARINGS ON TERRITORY

Portugal Says Indonesia's Presence There Has Been Presented As Fait Accompli, Stresses East Timorese Right to Self-Determination

The question of East Timor had long ceased to be a decolonization issue and the Special Committee on decolonization should strike it off its agenda and concentrate on true decolonization cases, the representative of Indonesia told the Committee this afternoon, as it concluded two days of hearings on the Territory.

The people of East Timor had opted for independence through integration with Indonesia in a decolonization process 21 years ago, he said in a right of reply statement. That had been an act of self-determination, in conformity with United Nations resolutions and their traditional democratic practices. Indonesia remained committed to cooperating with the Secretary- General in the tripartite dialogue with Portugal on the issue.

The representative of Portugal said there had been many attempts over the years to present Indonesia's presence in East Timor as a fait accompli. It had even been argued that Indonesia's occupation was justified on the basis of a free choice by the East Timorese -- an act which had never been recognized by the United Nations.

The Special Committee had a duty to persuade those responsible that a just solution could only be found if the parties concerned approached the negotiations sponsored by the Secretary-General in good faith, he said. They must recognize that only the people of East Timor had the right to determine their own future. The representative also spoke later in exercise of the right of reply.

A representative of Amnesty International said there were great expectations regarding the tripartite talks due to take place in New York on the question of East Timor. Action must be taken on human rights in the Territory in advance of a political settlement, in order to ensure a just solution to the political situation, she said.

Statements by were also made by petitioners for the following bodies: the Transitional Radical Party; the Supporting Movement for Democratisation in Indonesia; the Korea East Timor Solidarity, Lawyers for a Democratic Society and the Korea Human Rights Network; the British Coalition for East Timor; and the Asia Pacific Centre for Justice and Peace. A member of the Communist Party of Portugal also spoke, as did an individual petitioner.

In other business, the Special Committee this afternoon agreed to hear 31 petitioners when it takes up the question of Puerto Rico on Thursday, 19 June.

The Special Committee will meet again at 10 a.m. tomorrow, 18 June, to consider the issue of foreign economic interests and military activities in the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

the resolution that were directly relevant to issue before the Committee.

UTULA U. SAMANA (Papua New Guinea), Special Committee Chairman, said the petitioner should be allowed to complete his reading of the resolution.

Following the reading and a second objection by the representative of Indonesia, the Chairman said aspects of the resolution had not directly focused on the issue before the Committee and should not have been read. He therefore agreed with the point of order raised by the Indonesian representative.

JOHN MILLER, of the Netherlands-based Supporting Movement for Democratisation in Indonesia, said the dream of the Timorese people for peace and freedom lived on and was internationally recognized. There must be an end to the arrests, disappearances, killings, torture and intimidations that had been carried out for nearly 23 years by the Indonesian authorities. The international community must urge the Indonesian Government to stop its current crackdown on peaceful political activities and guarantee freedom of expression and association.

Mr. NATALEGAWA (Indonesia), speaking on a point of order, said many petitioners did not seem to understand the need to concentrate on the issue under discussion. He appealed to the Chairman to ensure that their statements dwelt on the subject at hand.

Mr. SAMANA (Papua New Guinea), Special Committee Chairman, urged the petitioner to focus on the issue before the Committee.

FRANK FITZGERALD, of Korea East Timor Solidarity, Lawyers for a Democratic Society and the Korea Human Rights Network, urged the Special Committee to send a mission to East Timor to inquire into the situation there, so as to facilitate the people's exercise of their right to selfdetermination. The General Assembly should ask for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice in the dispute over the Indonesian contention that the East Timorese had already exercised their right to selfdetermination in favour of integration with Indonesia.

The present tripartite talks involving Portugal, Indonesia and the United Nations were not sufficient to implement that right to selfdetermination, he said. A new framework should be hammered out. A genuine solution required a mechanism that would ensure the participation of the East Timorese in all processes leading to their self-determination. The Korean experience in the aftermath of Japanese colonialism bore that out.

KRISTIN SUNDEL, of the British Coalition for East Timor, said the Special Committee should consider the attention being given to the East Timorese question in Europe. In the United Kingdom, the campaign on behalf of the East Timorese people had grown. There had been a number of resolutions and statements by European intergovernmental bodies condemning Indonesia's actions in East Timor. The European Parliament had also called for the release of political prisoners. The Special Committee should identify measures to establish a United Nations presence in the Territory.

RUBEN LUIS TRISTAO DE CARVALDO E SILVA, a member of the Communist Party of Portugal, said many developments had occurred since the Special Committee considered the question of East Timor last year. The heroic struggle of that people had drawn attention to the problem. The Portuguese people and Government would not slacken in their active support for the people of East Timor until they achieved self-determination, freedom and an end to the Indonesian occupation of the Territory.

LIBERTATO C. BAUTISTA, of the Asia Pacific Centre for Justice and Peace, in Washington, D.C., said his organization had identified the East Timor struggle for human rights as a prime

(page 2 follows)
Special Committee Work Programme

The Special Committee on decolonization met this afternoon to conclude its hearing of petitioners on the question of East Timor.

Statements

DOMINGOS POLICARPIO DOS REIS, an individual petitioner, said the main issue with respect to East Timor had been the demise of Portugal's role. The East Timorese had realized that Portugal never intended to decolonize East Timor, so they made the decision to decolonize themselves and were integrated with Indonesia. It was astonishing to hear Portugal's rhetoric, as though it was a champion of East Timorese rights. Any proposal that Portugal should be re-established as an administering Power would be rejected. The East Timorese had been the victims of colonial rule and still carried those scars.

Today, the people of East Timor were concerned about issues that affected their lives, he said. Economic progress was crucial for the people. There were a handful of people and non-governmental organizations which would turn back that progress. The United Nations should close its chapter on the question of East Timor.

KERRY BROGAN, of Amnesty International, said there were great expectations regarding the talks due to take place in New York on the question of East Timor. Action must be taken on human rights in East Timor in advance of a political settlement, in order to ensure a just solution to the political situation. In recent weeks, tension had increased in the Territory. The Timorese resistance was not abating, and human rights abuses by the Indonesian armed forces showed no sign of improving. There had also been human rights abuses by armed opposition groups.

She said her organization was concerned about the lack of investigation into the human rights abuses in East Timor. Among Amnesty International's proposals for improving the human rights situation was the setting up a human rights monitoring office there. Steps should be taken by the Indonesian Government to monitor and verify human rights violations, including measures to ensure that local human rights groups were allowed to carry out their work, that peaceful demonstrations were allowed and that members of the armed forces implicated in human rights violations were suspended from active duty pending inquiries.

MARCO PERDUCA, of the Transitional Radical Party, said solution of the problem in East Timor had been delayed for too long. The time had come for a new commitment by the United Nations, in order to save the Maubere people and grant them self-determination, through a referendum in East Timor under United Nations supervision. A joint United Nations-European Union mission should be sent to the Territory to report on the human rights situation there. The setting up of an international criminal tribunal for East Timor was not the best way to deal with the heinous human rights violations, as it would only delay the whole process.

He then began to read a resolution on Indonesia which had been adopted by the European Parliament.

MARTY MULIANA NATALEGAWA (Indonesia), speaking on a point of order, objected to the reading of the resolution, which contained issues that were extraneous to the matter being addressed by the Special Committee. The petitioner should limit his references to aspects of

focus of its advocacy work. Numerous member organizations of the Centre had passed resolutions in support of selfdetermination of East Timor. One such resolution called for solidarity of churches in East Timor, as well as for an end to arms sales to Indonesia.

He said the United States National Council of Churches was sponsoring a high-level delegation to visit East Timor later this year. Quoting from another source, he said it was critical that the churches play a leading role on the question of East Timor. A recent mission of churches had seen a positive relationship between Catholics and Protestants in East Timor, contrary to what had been stated by some critics. Welcoming the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to two East Timorese, he said the struggle for the rights of the East Timorese people was now global. His Centre would continue to work for their right to self-determination.

FERNANDO NEVES (Portugal) said the attainment of independence for NonSelf-Governing Territories would not be fully accomplished until they were able to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. Portugal reaffirmed its resolve to contribute to a peaceful settlement of the question, taking full account of the legitimate aspirations of the people of East Timor. He welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to bring a new impetus to the talks under his auspices. The awarding of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize to Bishop Belo and Jose Ramos Horta had put the spotlight on East Timor, but it had not improved the human rights situation. That situation involved such abuses as an excessive military and security presence; arbitrary arrests, interrogation and torture; and political detentions.

The April resolution on human rights in Indonesia by the Commission on Human Rights was a strong political signal from the international community. It called on Indonesia to address seriously the situation in East Timor. Otherwise, it would continue to be exposed to international criticism.

Throughout the years, there had been many attempts to present Indonesia's presence in East Timor as a fait accompli, he said. It had even been argued that Indonesia's occupation was justified on the basis of a free choice by the East Timorese -- an act which had never been recognized by the United Nations. The outburst of violence during the recent illegal elections showed that without recognition of their right to self- determination, the East Timorese would not give up their fight. The Special Committee had a duty to persuade all those responsible that a just solution could only be found if the parties approached the negotiations sponsored by the Secretary-General in good faith. Those concerned must recognize that only the people of East Timor had the right to determine their own future.

Mr. NATALEGAWA (Indonesia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said he wished to address "the unwarranted allegations and misrepresentations" made by the representative of Portugal. For over two decades, there had been "a persistent pattern of fabrication of historical facts, as well as of the prevailing realities in East Timor". The Special Committee's current session had once again turned into an anti-Indonesia campaign, demonstrating that its sole purpose was to provide Portugal and its surrogates with a platform for voicing their self-serving political rhetoric.

It had been now 21 years since the decolonization process took place in East Timor, when the people opted for independence through integration with Indonesia, he said. That act was an exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination, in conformity with United Nations resolutions and their traditional democratic practices.

He stressed that resolutions 1541 (XV) and 2625 (XXV) were relevant to the case of East Timor. Implementation of a second process of decolonization with Portugal as administering Power -- "as it bungled the first one" -- was most unrealistic and showed how out of touch Portugal was with pertinent realities. It was astonishing that Portugal proclaimed itself as the socalled champion of self-determination and human rights, when its record in that field was known to be the worst in the annals of decolonization.

Following East Timor's integration with Indonesia, it had made vast strides in its development, he said. Its infrastructure today bore no resemblance to its tragic colonial past. Education, health care and communications reflected the tremendous progress achieved. The human rights of the people had been vastly enhanced. Indonesia's constitutional commitment to religious freedom throughout East Timor was fully upheld. The number of churches there had increased, and a new Bishop of Baucau had been ordained by Pope John Paul II to serve the growing Catholic population. Access to the province of East Timor was open.

He said the question of East Timor had long ceased to be a decolonization issue, although Portugal, the former colonial Power, had actively campaigned to keep it on the Special Committee's agenda. The question that needed to be addressed was "where do we go from here?". Was it credible for the Special Committee to satisfy the colonial subjugator and maintain its position as administering Power -- a role it abandoned 21 years ago? The time had come for the Special Committee to strike the item off its agenda and devote its time to true cases of decolonization, especially as the end of the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism drew near.

For its part, Indonesia remained committed to cooperating with the Secretary-General in the tripartite dialogue with Portugal, to seek a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor, so as to enable the people to continue on the path to development. After centuries of abuse and neglect, they deserved no less.

Mr. NEVES (Portugal), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said it was not in his country's interest to wage an anti-Indonesian campaign but a pro-Timorese campaign. He reiterated that the end of colonization must be the expression of the will of the people.

Mr. NATALEGAWA (Indonesia) reaffirmed that it was preposterous to speak of self-determination for the people of East Timor, which they had rightly chosen. Indonesia remained fully committed to protecting their human rights as part of the Indonesian nation.

Mr. NEVES (Portugal) said he was astonished to hear that the East Timorese right to self-determination had been fulfilled. That was totally in contradiction of United Nations resolutions.

Mr. NATALEGAWA (Indonesia) said that his Government's position was well known and he would like to reiterate it.

The Special Committee then decided to include the question of East Timor on the provisional agenda of its next session.

Mr. NATALEGAWA (Indonesia) said his country objected to the inclusion of that item on the Committee's agenda, as it had done at the outset of the hearing yesterday.

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